

Message Text

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14

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SAB-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-13 /071 W

----- 125688

R 151258Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7093

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5996

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PFOR, PA, AR

SUBJECT: PANAMA TREATY BRIEFING TEAM

1. PANAMANIAN BRIEFING TEAM VISITED BUENOS AIRES SEPT 3 TO 5. GROUP ARRIVED ON A FRIDAY EVENING AND LEFT MONDAY, AND THERE WAS VIRTUALLY NO PUBLIC NOTICE. ONLY ONE OR TWO PAPERS NOTED ARRIVAL OF GROUP, QUOTING FORMER FONMIN TACK'S COMMENTS TO AIRPORT REPORTERS ON ARRIVAL THAT PURPOSE OF VISIT WAS TO BRIEF GENERAL STAFFS OF LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES ON SECURITY ASPECT OF PANAMA CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATION QUESTION.

2. ACCORDING TO FONMINISTRY SOURCE, PANAMANIAN TEAM BRIEFED COMBINED GENERAL STAFFS OF ARMED FORCES. THEY DID NOT SEE FON MINISTER OR ANY OTHER SENIOR OFFICIAL OF GOA. NOTHING EXCEPTIONAL CAME OUT OF BRIEFING OF GENERAL STAFFS, ACCORDING TO FONMINISTRY SOURCE, AND HE COULD ONLY SAY THAT HE "BELIEVED" THAT SOME SORT OF COMMUNIQUE HAS BEEN ISSUED BY THE STAFFS CONCERNING THE VISIT AND BRIEFING--BUT HE HAD NOT SEEN IT. WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO LOCATE SUCH A COMMUNIQUE IN THE PRESS, OR CONFIRM THAT ONE WAS ISSUED. THERE WAS NO PRESS CONFERENCE. THERE HAS BEEN NO COMMENT ON THE VISIT OR THE PANAMA CANAL ISSUE IN THE MEDIA WHICH COULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO THE VISIT.

3. FONMINISTRY SOURCE ASSURED US THAT GOA POLICY IS BASED
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ON EQUAL FRIENDSHIP FOR US AND PANAMA AND DESIRE TO SEE

CANAL PROBLEM RESOLVED TO BENEFIT OF ALL.

4. COMMENT: PANAMANIAN TEAM MADE REMARKABLY LITTLE
IMPACT. TIMING OF VISIT OVER A WEEKEND MAY HAVE HAD SOMETHING TO
DO WITH THIS, BUT COMPLETE LACK OF PRESS COVERAGE AND EVEN OF
APPARENT INTEREST IN FONMINISTRY AND MILITARY CIRCLES INDICATES
CANAL IS NOT BURNING ISSUE TO AVERAGE ARGENTINE.
HILL

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04 MAY 2006

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